

# MOTOCROSS

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# The French Too Good

Story Adam Wheeler images FIM /Nuno Laranjeira

The triumvirate of Monster Energy Yamaha's Romain Febvre, Kemea Yamaha's Benoit Paturel and HRC's Gautier Paulin helped give 85,000 fans a rollicking show and cause for jubilation today by hoisting the Chamberlain trophy from the top of the podium at the 2016 MXoN in Italy. The Monster Energy Motocross of Nations presented by Fiat Professional slammed into the wonderfully scenic Maggiora Park circuit and reams of spectators from a myriad of territories created a swirl of noise, vibrancy, colour and atmosphere as the world's biggest off-road motorcycle race was once again essential viewing.





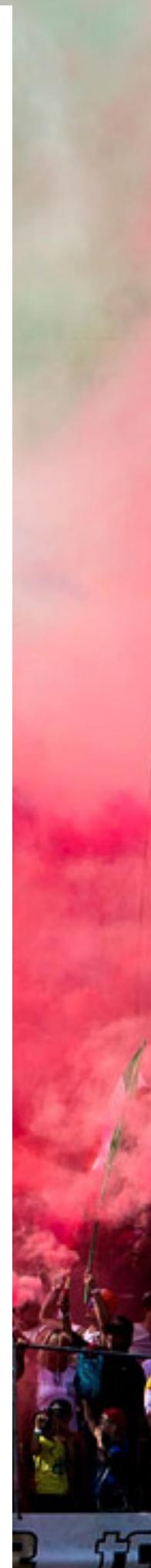


First created in 1947 the 'World Cup' of the sport returned to a spiritual home north of Milan with memories of Team USA's 1986 iconic success now part of moto-cross folklore and fabric. Instead of the red, white and blue of the stars and stripes it was the tricolour of France that ruled the spectacle for the third year in succession and since they first triumphed in 2001.

Maggiora was magnificent; the daunting drops and heaven-reaching hills providing a fabulous stage for racing. The Italian hard-pack was both fast and bumpy: scarred with ruts and edges that forced motorcycle-and-rider to find ragged limits. Thirty-eight countries with three-rider teams travelled to the facility and were whittled down to twenty for the Final and the three motos on Sunday. With two riders in each outing, nations could count on six results and were able to submit their best five for the ultimate ranking.

Boasting the lowest (and best) score was the French...but after a chaotic and riveting finale that saw the classification settled on the last corner of the last lap. 2015 MXGP World Champion Febvre, who had beaten Tony Cairoli to win the first race of the day and push his moto streak in his country-livery to three on the bounce, passed Monster Energy DRT Kawasaki's Tommy Searle (riding for Great Britain) for fourth place as fans had already started to streak onto the track. That crucial point was enough to ensure that the French beat the Netherlands and touched the ticker tape first. Rookie Paturel finished fourth in the MX2 class to make his contribution and Paulin was third in MX Open.

"I got Searle on the last lap but when I passed the pitlane they had written '2nd place' on the board. I was like 'Damn; just one point...' I crossed the finish line and everyone was saying "" You won! You won" and I still didn't believe







it," said Febvre, who rounded-off a difficult 2016 season where a mid-season concussion ruined a strong title defence. "The first race was really nice and I made a good rhythm. It had been a long time since I led a moto like that so it was a good feeling. Last year was my first Nations so it was really special but I've taken experience. Benoit rode well and Gautier has been here many times but overall it is great for everyone to keep this place."

Belgium's Jeremy Van Horebeek was the top MX2 athlete and took the lively YZ250F to fifth position in the first moto; a considerable achievement against a raft of 450cc motorcycles. He was just denied sixth in another last lap attack – this time by Britain's Shaun Simpson – in his second appearance and then had to watch as the Flemish would miss out on another rostrum celebration to Team USA by just three points.

"Mixed feelings," JVH said. "I think I have been eight times on the podium with Team Belgium. I won today but it is a pity that I'm not on the podium again. I had a lot of fun today and the crowd was really awesome. What can I say? I have to 'give' this one also to my [Yamaha] team and Michele [Rinaldi] for that fantastic 250; without that, I think winning was almost impossible."

The second race – that pitched MX2 and MX Open together – produced an eye-catching performance from Team USA's Jason Anderson. The Anaheim I Super-cross winner (racing with a broken foot bone) was free to escape to the flag once the pursuing Jeffrey Herlings (Netherlands) had crashed but a bizarre collision after the finish line when he was landed on by Japan's Chihiro Notsuka and suffered a concussion meant that the Americans were a man-down for the third and decisive closer.

Pressure fell onto Cooper Webb's shoulders and the AMA 250MX & SX Champion made it up to fifth with two laps to go until he dropped the Yamaha on a heavily cambered turn and dropped to tenth, effectively letting Holland and France duke out the mad scramble for points and prizes.

Monster Energy Pro Circuit Kawasaki's Arnaud Tonus filled a strong role to help Switzerland to sixth overall (tying with Italy for fifth) and Searle's fifth place in the third race was the best finish for the UK. "I feel alright about today even if I had a bit of arm-pump. It was hard to pass on this track so it was an advantage to be out front from the start," said Tonus after just his second major meeting on the KX450F. "I did my best and maybe I was not in the best shape on the 450 but overall it was alright. This year was really close. It was really cool to ride here and a lot of Swiss guys were in the crowd and I could feel the push. It was really nice. I always want to do better...but that was the best I could do today."

"There was a lot of good company in that last race so I was happy with fifth," commented recently crowned British Champion Searle. "It's the best-of-the-best out there and it helped with the start I had."

The Peter Chamberlain trophy heads towards France for another year and in twelve months' time the cup will re-emerge on another continent.











# SUPERMOTOCROSS

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ANDERSON

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MUSQUIN

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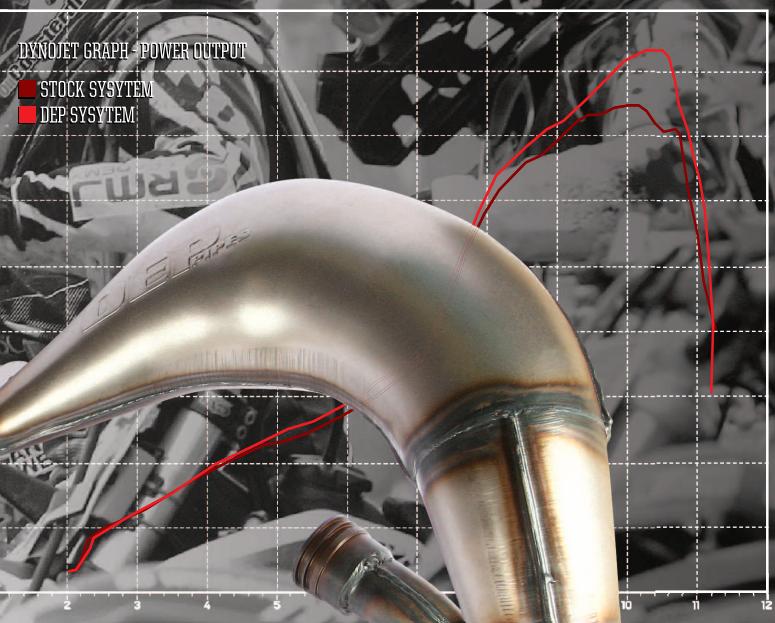
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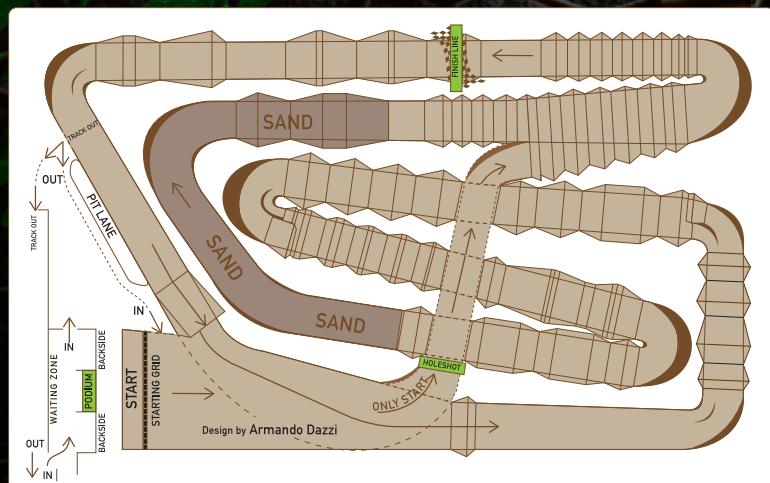
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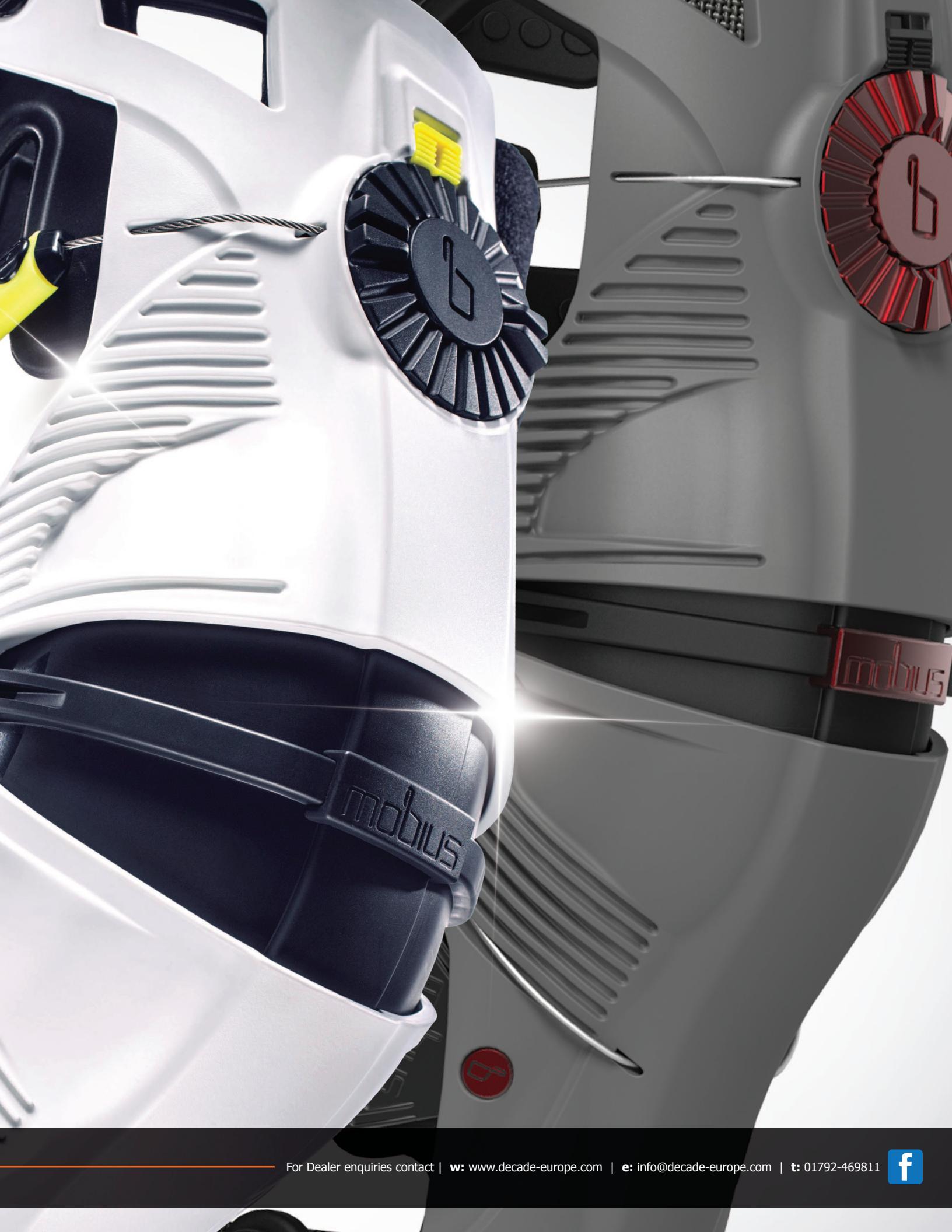
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# SUPERMOTOCROSS

Story Geoff Meyer images Cudby, Archer and Nuno

It doesn't get any better than this. Ryan Dungey vs Romain Febvre, Jeffrey Herlings vs Tim Gajser, Marvin Musquin vs Gautier Paulin, Zach Osborne vs Evgeny Bobryshev. The list goes on and on. And on Saturday night at the Veltins Arena in Germany, we will find out who has the stronger team within the brands. KTM, HRC, Kawasaki, Yamaha, Suzuki, TM and Husqvarna.

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Giuseppe Luongo who will promoter this event with his company Youthstream is more than a little excited to see how this event turns out.

"Everybody is really excited for this event. I think the idea is great and for sure the event will be fantastic," he said, "It's in a central location in Europe, in Germany, it's close to Belgium and Holland as well. I think this is a big step for the future of our sport. All of the infrastructure will be even better than what we already have now in the normal MXGP paddock and all the job that Youthstream is doing with the promotion and marketing, all the work that the manufacturers are doing, and all the work that the riders are putting in will make this a great show, and it's a great opportunity to bring in more fans to see our sport and it's and hopefully bring more partners."

Ten-time FIM Motocross World Champion and the new team owner and manager of Team Suzuki World MXGP, Stefan Everts knows that this event will produce some great racing.

"For Suzuki this is a good opportunity for our promotion and we know that Youthstream is pushing very hard to promote our sport as good as possible. I think that is why it is so important for Suzuki to be there and to support this event. I think it will take new interest, it's a completely new concept, which makes people curious and it's cool to see the manufacturers cup coming back. From Suzuki's side, we support this event and we will do our best to bring out the best riders for the best show and to win!"

Former Grand Prix racer and MXoN hero Pit Beirer from KTM also knows that the teams event, will bring something special for the sport.





I mean, we really think this is going to be an outstanding event, an historical race and I think to make the event great you need the best motocross riders in the world. I am a passionate motocross fan and for years we have been pushing to get the best world championship riders and the best supercross riders on the same track. We are in a great position that we have the number one and number three supercross riders in the world, and for us it wasn't a difficult decision to bring them. You have to remember our factory is in the middle of Europe and this is a great chance for the people from KTM to attend this event and see the best of the best racing against each other. From the first moment we wanted this event, and we hope it is a big success. Of course, there is always the history where you come from, and I am an ex motocross guy and to see the best motocross riders from America and the best from Europe, it's a dream. I am also a big fan of the supercross and I am always impressed what is possible to do with our sport in a big stadium. It won't be supercross, more supercross and motocross mixed, but we will be able to sit in one seat and see the whole track. With a kind of supercross atmosphere. There have been races in Europe in stadiums, but never the best versus the best, so I am really looking forward to that.







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# Monster Energy Motocross of Nations

# Drama

Story Geoff Meyer images Nuno

More than a week after this year's Monster Energy Motocross of Nations, and I am still amazed by what this event continues to bring. Not sure I have ever seen a race that created so much drama. We say it every single year for the last 10 years, but this event just gets bigger and bigger. It wouldn't matter if the top ten riders in the world didn't compete, this race stands on its own as a race of nations, not of individuals. I seriously think you could send the D team from USA and they would still perform, so rich is this nation on pure pride and emotion.



The ride by Jason Anderson on Sunday, his moto victory says it all about the American riders. Coming up against possibly the best motocross rider in the world (Jeffrey Herlings) Anderson put on a clinic, pulling a brilliant start and leading every single lap of the race. Sure Herlings closed up on him, and looked sure to pass, but it didn't happen and Anderson put Team USA on top of the points.

What followed, his horrible accident was one of the most shocking moments I have witnessed in my 45 years of following motocross. His celebration was turned into a nightmare as he fell to the ground and we all just hoped he was ok. It really didn't matter at that moment who won the event, it didn't matter if FIM had the upper hand over AMA or vice versa, all that mattered that Anderson was ok.

For Cooper Webb the pressure went through the roof as he was left to stand tall for Team USA, and for a majority of the race he did. Pushing Netherlands off the points lead, grabbing a three-point lead it looked like Team USA were going to make the best comeback in the history of the MXoN. Unfortunately, it wasn't to be, as Team Netherlands once again grabbed the top spot, and then finally Team France.

Drama in the highest order. Emotions that you couldn't even imagine. While France celebrated, The Netherlands and America could only watch from the lower steps of the podium. Disappointment so clear on their faces.

I felt for young Cooper Webb, just weeks ago a hero in his home state as he won the USGP. A really nice kid who is always polite and respectful to the GP scene and its riders. The emotion on his face was clear, so close to tears and so disappointed with his own effort.

As Febvre, Paturel and Paulin drank champagne from the Chamberlain Trophy, Netherlands slowly began to accept their runner-up spot, a position they have held before and one they





will hold again. Victory was an outside chance coming in, they came oh so close, but this young Dutch team, with a long list of teenage Dutchmen waiting in the wings, will one day win this event. If Herlings can continue to improve, put together a bunch of 1-1 results, then riders like Coldenhoff, Bogers and Pootjes just need to be consistent to give Holland victory. In the sand in 2018 they will go in as favorites, and a victory would be so sweet. Just as it should be for Team USA at home in 2017.

What about Team USA. How brave an effort did these guys put in? Despite their erratic Saturday, where it was clear their riders were pushing too hard, making mistakes and causing their own drama, they fought back, as they always do. You can never count Team USA out. On pride alone they will not be beaten until that final flag falls.

Sunday and the accident to Anderson was the only real moment that their luck was somebody else's fault, the accidents before, the poor starts, even to some point the Webb crash were just errors that former USA teams didn't make. Their luck ran out in 2011, when Team France suffered disappointment. Since that day at St Jean d'Angely Team USA haven't been able to call on that luck. It's been difficult, but they will come back, and next year's MXoN should go to the home team. Maybe next year will be the first of a number of MXoN victories for the Americans.

This event needs Team USA, their legacy at this event. Riders like Ryan Dungey, Eli Tomac, Ken Roczen, Chad Reed or anyone else who elected not to race in 2016 will more than likely come back. The excuses for not coming need to stop. This is the biggest, most dramatic race in the sports history. For around 70 years the best have raced the best, DeCoster vs Hannah, Thorpe vs Bailey, Geboers vs Johnson, Everts vs Carmichael, Cairoli vs Dungey.





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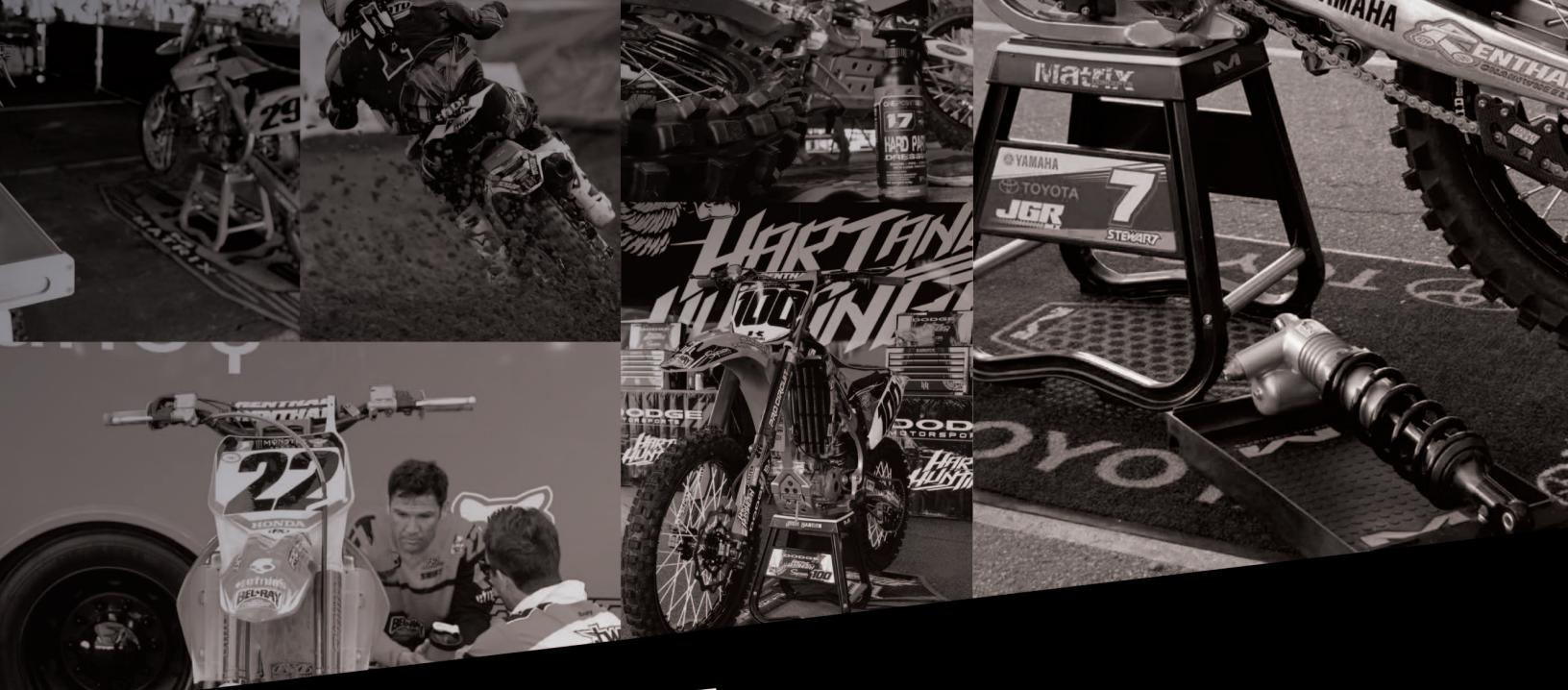
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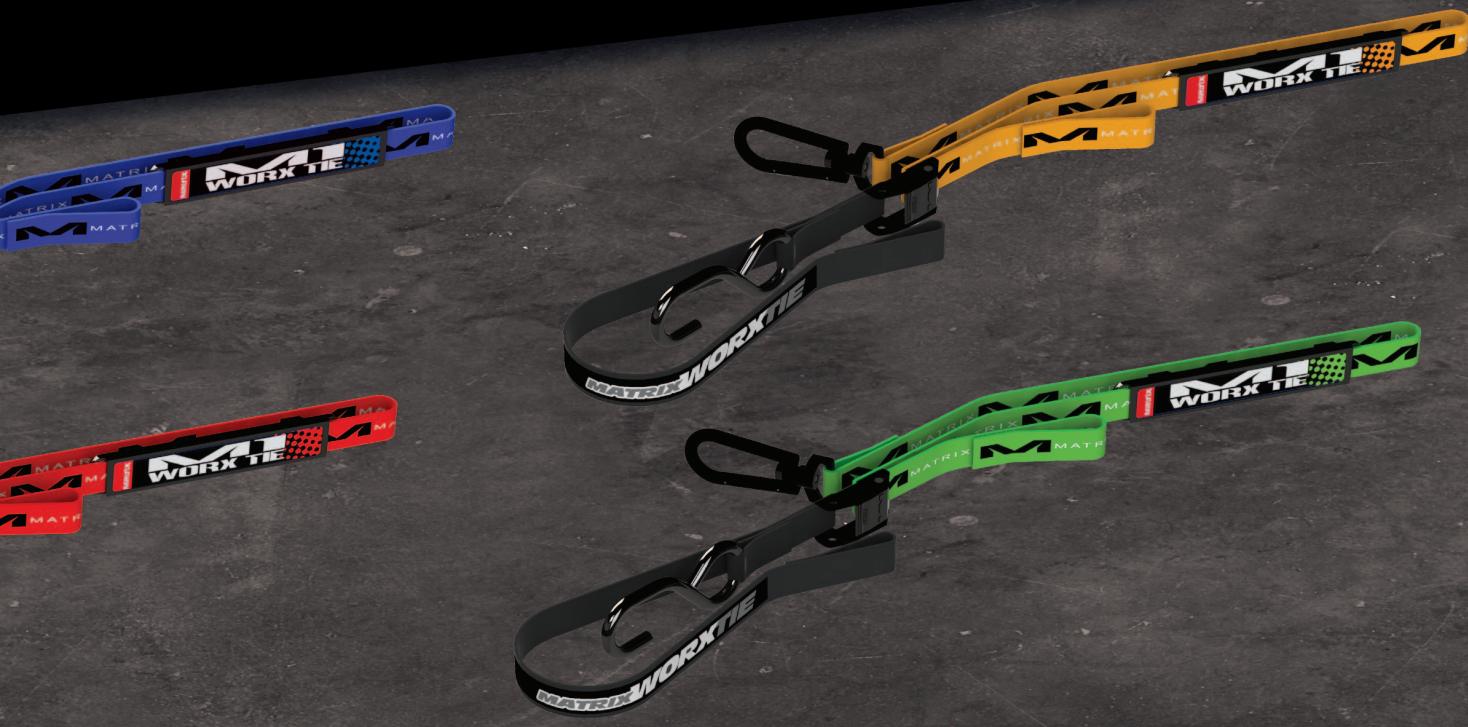
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